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A WOMAN FREE

& OTHER POEMS

BY RUTH

INTRODUCTION BY
EDWIN MARKHAM

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A WOMAN FREE
AND
OTHER POEMS

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WOMAN FREE
AND
OTHER POEMS

By RUTH LA PRADE

Introduction by
EDWIN MARKHAM

THIRD EDITION

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TO MY MOTHER AND FATHER
TO
RESIN A. AND MILA TUPPER MAYNARD
AND TO YOU, COMRADE,
WHOEVER YOU ARE.

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A WORD AT THE BEGINNING

In the eager pages of this little volume we find a spirit deeply touched with the love of humanity, a spirit alive to all its raptures and despairs.

These verses are written by one of the vibrant and valorous souls of the Far West, a young woman who is yearning to help pass on to all souls the beauty of earth, the beauty of joy.

Intense sympathy for man and nature is the pulse of this unpretentious, free-verse offering. The writer does not claim to come with ornamental periods, with polished phrases. Indeed, she modestly disclaims the labors and the laurels of the poet, and says with a sparkle:

> "Poets have carefully carved their songs,
> Toiling with words, phrases, stanzas,
> 'Till all was finished,
> But I do not carefully carve my songs,
> Toiling with words, phrases, stanzas.
> And all that I leave is unfinished——
>
> That you shall be a poet
> Finishing each according to yourself."

So Ruth Le Prade comes with the simple speech of every day,. declaring her compassion for the multitudes, announcing her contempt of caste and conventionality, affirming her faith in the coming of the great day when Love shall take form in a Comrade Order, wherein all from the greatest to the least shall have the social and material resources for living a rich and abundant life.

These pages stir with a trembling earnestness, shine with a vivid fire of faith. May they go forth to kindle hearths, to kindle hearts.

New West Brighton, N.Y.
1916

Edwin Markham

THE SONG OF A WOMAN FREE

I am a woman free. My song
Flows from my soul with pure and joyful strength.
It shall be heard through all the noise of things—
A song of joy where songs of joy were not.
My sister singers, singing in the past,
Sang songs of melody but not of joy—
For woman's name was Sorrow, and the slave
Is never joyful tho he smiles.

I am a woman free. Too long
I was held captive in the dust. Too long
My soul was surfeited with toil or ease
And rotted as the plaything of a slave.
I am a woman free at last
After the crumbling centuries of time.
Free to achieve and understand;
Free to become and live.

I am a woman free. With face
Turned toward the sun, I am advancing
Toward love that is not lust,
Toward work that is not pain,
Toward home which is the world,
Toward motherhood which is not forced,
And toward the man who also must be free.

With face turned toward the sun,
Strong and radiant-limbed,
I advance, singing,
And my song is as free
As the soul from which it flows.
I advance toward that which is, but was not;
Toward that which is not, but is yet to be.
I, the free woman, advance singing,
And with face turned toward the sun.
Let Ignorance and Tyranny
Tremble at the sound of my feet.

* * *

I am a woman free.
Singing the song of joy,
Strong and radiant-limbed,
I advance toward the work which waits for me,
The joyful work out in my home the world;
And toward the man who is my mate.
Oh I am strong and magnetic—
I have not wasted myself in sensuality;
And equally strong and magnetic
Is the man who is my mate.

For the glory of Motherhood
I have conserved my strength.
And for the glory of Fatherhood
He has conserved his strength.
I have passed by the lovers
Who passionately called to me in the name of love,
But whose lips were only hot with lust.
I have remained true to my own soul
And to the souls which are enfolded within me.
And no man shall mingle his body with mine
Who is not pure.

I am the free woman,
No longer a slave to man,
Or anything in all the universe—
Not even to myself.
I am the free woman.
I hold and seek that which is mine:
Strength is mine and purity;
World work and cosmic love;
The glory and the joy of Motherhood.

I am not strong and clean for myself alone,
But for all people;
My work and my love are for all people;
And I shall not be the mother of one child,
But of all children—
For I myself am the daughter
Of all women and all men.

Oh I am free! My song
Flows from my soul with pure and joyful strength;
It shall be heard thru all the noise of things—
A song of joy where songs of joy were not.
Oh I am free! I thrill
With radiant life and gladness.
I advance toward all that waits for me.
I chant the song of Freedom as I go.
My face is toward the sun,
My soul is toward the light,
My feet are turned toward all that waits for me.
I advance! I advance!
Let Ignorance and Tyranny
Tremble at the sound of my song!

I HAVE LOVED——

I have loved winds that wander, tossing the trees, tossing the silver leaves;
Touching my body softly or with rude strength;
Blowing thru my hair; saluting me and passing on.

I have loved flowers that blow:
Silver lilies, purple poppies, orange flowers, honeysuckles, pansies, lilacs, geraniums, violets.

I have loved the contact of the grass, and of the trees;
Of the brown earth pregnant with promise.

I have loved the song of birds and of the stars;
I have loved the sound of waters as they flow.

I have loved the glory of the dawn and of the night.
I have loved the fragrance of the woods and of the flowers.
I have loved the mystery and strangeness of the sea.
I have loved the mighty mountains and the hills.
I have loved the mystic Silence.
I have loved the comradeship of animals.

I have clasped hands with nature.
I have thrilled with all its strange and passionate joy.
Oh I have loved and understood.

* * *

I have loved winds that wander—
But I have loved men more.

I have passionately loved the flowers: poppies, orange flowers, geraniums, violets—
But more passionately have I loved the human flowers:
The babies, the little children, the schoolboy and the schoolgirl, the young lovers, the old lovers, the mother, the father, the worker.

I have loved the contact of the grass and of the trees;
Of the brown earth pregnant with promise—
But I have loved more the contact with my fellowmen.

I have loved the song of birds and of the stars;
I have loved the sound of waters as they flow—
But more than the song of birds and stars,
More than the sound of waters flowing
I have loved the sound of my comrades' voices
And the music of their souls.

More than the glory of the dawn and of the night
Have I loved the glory of mankind.

And greater than the mystery and strangeness of the sea
Is the mystery and strangeness of the mass.

And there is no fragrance as sweet as the fragrance of souls that love each other.

Oh more than the mystic Silence have I loved communion with my fellowmen.

I have loved the mighty mountains—but man is mightier than they.
The comradeship of animals have I loved—but still more have I loved the comradeship of men.

Because I have clasped hands with nature I can clasp
hands more knowingly with man.

Oh I have thrilled with all his strange and passionate
joy;
And I have wept with all his sorrows.
I have loved him in his beauty and his strength;
I have loved him in his struggle and his pain.
I have loved him to the heights and to the depths—
And I have understood.

Oh more than everything have I loved man.
I have loved man more than God—
For man is God made manifest.

I AM A WOMAN AND I LOVE——

Amid the darkness and the doubt
I kneel and do not know.
Around me the wild dust
Of unforgotten dreams is blown;
And in my ears the sound of tortured souls.

Amid the horrors of the dark
I kneel and do not know.
I do not know, I do not know,
There is not anything I know——
Except——

I am a woman and I love:
I am a woman and I love——
Not one man only, but all men;
Not one child only, but all children;
And not one nation, but the world.

WE CANNOT MOUNT ALONE

Oh I would mount to the bright stars;
I would be joyful always;
I would be pure and full of strength;
But alas, I cannot—

For as long as one man is sorrowful and broken
I, too, am sorrowful and broken.
And as long as one woman is surrounded with vileness
I, too, am surrounded with vileness;
And as long as one soul is weak
I, too, am weak.

No bird falls to the earth with broken wings;
No lily's lovely whiteness turns to brown
But I, too, am affected.
And as long as one small child sobs in the night
My heart will answer, sobbing, too.

The stars are bright tho they are far away.
I cannot mount to them alone,
Nor would I if I could.
I am no nearer to them than the level of the lowest man.
I can but lift myself by raising him.

Humanity is one, we cannot rise apart;
And joy, that strange sweet thing which all men seek,
Is never found by those who seek alone.

The stars are bright tho they are far away.
We cannot climb toward them, apart.
Oh let us wake, thrilled with a radiant love,
And mount forever upward, hand in hand!

TO MY FRIENDS

More sweet than the tumult of birds at dawn,
And the perfume of flowers in the moonlight,
Is the song I would build for my friends.

Stronger than the eternal laws
And as constant,
Is the song I would build for those I love.

Oh I would build with mighty melody
A song
For those to whom my soul doth kneel.

Oh I have loved many things!
Birds and flowers and books,
But more than all else have I loved my friends.

And I have built many songs;
But I shall build one
That shall transcend them all.

Oh my friends, I give you my song;
It is all of me.
I have not builded it with words,
It is the music of my soul.

* * *

I stumbled over dark rocks
Blackening them with my blood;
I was blind I could not see.
But my friend walking near me said, "Open thine eyes"
And behold the sun was shining on a garden of flowers.

The serpent had bitten me,
Bruising my heart;
I knew the vileness and the lusts of man——
But my friend walking near me clasped my hand,
In him I saw man's greatness and forgot.

I lay low upon the earth,
A tortured thing of dust——
But my friend's white soul, moving upward,
Drew me with mystic music toward the stars.

Oh in the strong love of my friends
I have found strength.
And in the purity of their faith
I have found hope.
In the glory of their lives I see man's heights and possibilities.
Within their souls I have found God.

A MESSAGE

My eyes have not seen you;
And my ears have not heard you speak;
Yet I know you are beautiful.

The mate of beauty is beautiful.
The companion of love cannot hate.
The friend of hope moves forward.
The lover of freedom is strength.

Dear Comrade, I love you!
I twine a wreath of blossoms in your hair,
I gaze into your eyes
And tremble with the wonder of your dream.
Perhaps we may not meet upon the road,
And so I toss my song to you and cry,
"Good luck!"

TO MY COMRADE WHO KNOWS ALL THINGS

I have a Comrade who knows all things—and understands.

Many winters have silvered his soft shining hair,
And his heart is as young as the first flower in spring,
And as old as the first sorrow in man.

My Comrade has soared to the white heights of inspiration.
He has stood face to face with God.
He has walked with workers.
He has talked with flowers and with animals.
He has sung with the birds.
He has heard the voices of the leaves, and of the winds, and of the stars.

He has heard the music of the universe.

He has felt the charm and passion of the sea.
His soul has knelt to the great mountains;
And expanded with the vast mystery of Beauty.
He has learned the lesson of the Silence.
He has danced with the bright waters.
He has felt all sorrow and all joy.
He has loved all people.
He has dreamed the Dream.

My Comrade is kind and simple as a little child—he knows all things.
He is not critical nor harsh;
He does not pass judgment upon others—he understands.

He has not sought for wealth nor fame.
He has expressed himself in service to his fellowmen.

He is a singer of great songs.
He is a thinker of great thoughts.
He is a doer of great deeds.
He knows all things—and understands.

* * *

I have loved you, my Comrade, so long! so long!
Your songs have gone into my blood.
I have knelt before your great white soul.
I have loved you so long! so long!

I never dreamed that we should meet—except in Fairyland.
I never dreamed that we should pass so near on the great Highway.

You stretched your hands to me.
We gazed into each other's eyes.
Our souls leapt like two flames—and mingled.
I was dumb. But you who know all things—understood.

* * *

Oh my Comrade, I would bring you a gift
As a symbol of the reverent love I bear you;
For the impulse of love is to give.

I would bring you silver lilies—
How joyfully they would grow 'neath the rays of your great white soul.
I would bring you the poets we have loved so.
I would bring you the smiles of babies and lovers.
I would bring you the charm of the moonlight and the sunlight.

I would bring you the glory of the dawn and the fragrance of the night.

I would bring you multitudes of the things I have loved.
But—you who know all things, possess all things.
And no one could add to what is yours.

* * *

My Comrade, my song of you flows from my soul.
I dare not slay it—
Tho I know it is not meet to sing it.

For who am I, that I should sing a song for one who is a master singer?
And who am I that I should make a song for one who is so great and good?

But you who know all things, will understand.

BEAUTIFUL FACE

Beautiful face with your soft, silver hair,
And your white soul shining thru,
I love you so.
Oh kind are your dear eyes—they understand all;
And kind is your dear smile, enfolding all;
And bright is your white soul, which illumines all.

Beautiful face that I love so,
Many years have passed over you,
And each has made you richer and more beautiful.
You shine within the consciousness of men like a white star,
Leading them on to heights of inspiration and of love.

BECAUSE YOUR BEAUTY IS

Darkness, Earthquake and Storm,
And I in the ruins alone,
With my crumbled heart at my feet.
Then the luminous whiteness of your soul shone down
upon me;
And I lifted up my face unto your love—
A love which folds all creatures to your breast,
The love of Socrates and Christ:
Understanding all,
Forgiving all,
Hoping all—
And I was glad
Because your beauty is!

As I go the long road
And the dust is in my face,
I will remember.
As the silken bonds which comrades have made to hold
me, I tear apart,
And the ground is moistened with my blood,
I will remember.
When those who pass me strike
Because they cannot understand,
I will remember.
And when in utter loneliness I stand,
Torn with the pains of desolation,
I will remember.
Yea! even when my soul in darkness
Falls writhing with utmost agony,
I will remember.
I will forget the agony and tears;
I will forgive the bitterness and blows;

I will lift my face unto the mighty love;
I will be glad
Because your beauty is!

And when death has folded me in silent mist,
And the sunlight and the moonlight know me no more,
When the purple on the distant hills
Smites me no more with adoration,
When music moves me no longer,
And the tremulous mystery of spring
Wakens no answer in my heart—
The flowers will still grow toward you,
And the birds will still sing near you,
The tortured ones within your arms will smile,
They will be glad
Because your beauty is.

YOUR GREAT WHITE SOUL

I kneel before your great white Soul, oh my Comrade!
I kneel before it in awe and adoration.
Though I am unworthy to kneel before you, I love you;
And when I am with you, your greatness makes me forget even my unworthiness.
You are like the sun which shines upon all flowers alike,
Helping each to bloom in its own way:
And before your great white Soul I kneel in silence.

WHERE THE FAIRIES LIVE

Dost thou not know where the fairies live?

The fairies live in the lilies white,
And in the silver soft moonlight;
The fairies live in mad delight
Within my heart—tonight.

THE PURPLE WISTARIA

The purple wistaria grows upward, seeking the stars.
Sweet is its perfume, strangely sweet;
And silver are its leaves, fairy leaves.

I walk in the moonlight near the purple wistaria which
grows upward, toward the stars.
I walk in the moonlight near the strange, sweet flower
that I love so.

Oh the mystery of night is in my blood!
And the charm of the moonlight is in my heart!
And the fragrance of the flower thrills thru my soul!
Oh I am mad with strange and passionate joy!

Flower that I love so, flower that grows upward, seek-
ing the stars;
Flower with the strange sweet perfume and the silver
fairy leaves;
Why do you thrill me with such strange and passionate
joy?
Why do you madden me with ecstasy divine?

Flower that I love so, your beauty vibrates thru my
soul forever,—
Oh help me upward, for I, too, am seeking the stars!

MY HEART EXPANDS AS IT REACHES TO ENFOLD

When I returned after a long absence
My Lover said to me,
"Why do you continually speak of these new friends, these new loves?
I am sorrowful, I rage with jealousy."

But I said to my Lover,
Gazing deep into her eyes,
"Did you think my heart so small that by enfolding others there would be less room for you?
Can there be too many blossoms in spring?
Does the dawn greet many birds with less joy than one?"

"Ah Beloved, my heart expands as it reaches to enfold."

TOGETHER

A thousand birds are singing in my heart—
Because I am near you.
A thousand birds make music in my soul.

I did not know that I could be so happy.

I thought my heart a barren place,
Heavy with dead dreams;
But it is flooded with eternal Love.

Life is more than heaven—
We two are together.

IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO LOVE TOO MUCH

If I had loved you less,
I might have been a happy woman,
So they say.

If I had loved less,
I had not ventured all—and lost.
I had not hurled defiance
At the cold respectability of man
And faced the censure of a world.

But, dear, I could not love you less.
You came into my life
Like a song when all was still,
Like a bird where birds were not,
Like a bright star in a black, black night.

I could not love you less;
I would not give the wild, strange sweetness of your kiss,
The sound of your dear voice saying, "I love you!"
For everything the world could yield.

If I had loved you less,
I might have held you longer.
But, dear, I would not breathe one word of blame.
Whatever you have done, I know
That for a while you loved me.

Your soul is like a free, strong bird that soars,
Men cannot put such souls in cages.

I would not be a petty soul
Who seeks for love
And cries out that the price is great—
There is no price too great to pay for love.
And such a love as ours was worth
All heaven, hell and earth.

If I had loved you less,
I would not wake now in the night,
Blinded with burning tears;
Reaching my yearning arms,
Finding you not.

If I had loved you less,
I would not fancy in the dusk
That I could hear your voice—
Your dear loved voice
Calling to me across the world.

If I had loved you less,
I would not see you now
In every baby's eyes,
I would not feel the dumb and ceaseless pain
Which tears my heart.

If I had loved you less—
But, dear, I would not love you less,
I would but love you more,
If it were possible.

We few sad souls who stray with Love,
Out of the cage where men have bid us sing,
Have learned some things while we were 'mid the stars.

And tho the race, its false conventions spurned,
Would cry us down into the depths of hell,

We rise triumphant, hurling our glad words
Across eternity—
The stars know they are true:

There is no price too great to pay for love.
It is not possible to love too much!

SALUTATION TO THE DAY

Glorious Day, I salute thee!
Enfold me with thy beauty and thy joy;
Make me radiant with service;
Thrill my soul with vision and with dream!

Upon this day I shall walk nearer to the goal;
I shall lift my face with greater consecration and with hope;
I shall send forth throughout all time vibrations of love, beauty, joy, strength and peace.

A SONG

For you the hills are white with snow.
For you the red leaved poppies blow.
For you my heart sings soft and low.
My dear, I love you, love you so.

All things await our coming, dear.
The flowers and the dream are here.
We need but seek and we may rear
A temple where our souls may hear
The music of the stars.

Let us so love that our love may
Light other souls upon the way;
Find sweeter roses in the May
Someday!

I WILL FADE INTO A STAR

I will fade into a star;
You will know that I am near
Though afar.

I will fade into a flower;
I will greet you every hour
With the perfume and the dew;
I will sing a song to you.

I will fade into a dream,
Where the joyous fairies gleam,
In a mystic music-beam.

I will fade into a brook;
I will lift my head and look
At the sunshine and the air;
I will wander everywhere.

I will fade into a song
That will ease the heart of wrong.
I will weave a sacred shrine
Where thy soul may mate with mine.

I will walk with you each day,
I will clasp your hand and say,
"There are roses in the May."

TO WALT WHITMAN

Dear Father, you called for those who were to justify
you.
Behold they appear!
With a loud shout they announce themselves.
Rough they are with the touch of the wind;
Magnetic with the touch of the sun;
And their voices are strong, beautiful.

But those who feared you and ran from you
Are equally frighened by them.
The past-worshippers, the mediocre, the feeble-souled,
the tiny-minded, the scholars who feed on dead
men's bones,—
All these are confused and recede.

They will have none of you nor your fearless brood.
They shut themselves in closed houses, fearing the
wind;
The sun might fade their carpets—so they die.

Oh why did you ask to be justified?
To the understanding you are already justified;
And to the rest you can never be.

Does the earth need to be justified? or the sun?
Wise men once said the earth was flat.
The earth in its greatness was silent.
And if I, gazing at the sun,
Contend it gives no light—
I merely prove myself a fool.

MY SOUL IS SINGING WITH THE STARS

My soul is singing with the stars.
I vibrate with the love of life.
I thrill with joyous melody.
Oh, I am one with all the flow and glow of life!

And all the flowers sweet with dew are singing, too.
And all the little blades of grass;
And all the fairies as they pass;
And all the moonbeams and the leaves,
And every gentle, fragrant breeze,—
Yes, everything is singing, too, even you!

Ah, love! this symphony of life,—
Each planet singing in its place,
Each atom singing in its place,
Each grain of sand and drop of dew singing, too,—
How marvelous, how glorious it is!

Life's melody forever flows;
Love glows;
And our souls sing amid the stars.

MY COMMANDMENT

Other things I have said to thee, beloved, thou mayest forget,
But this thou wilt never forget:
Thou art a part of the great harmony called life;
Resist not love—let thou the music out.

IN THE ABSENCE OF YOUR LOVE

As a flower fades and falls
When the dew from heaven comes not,
So I fade and fall, Beloved,
In the absence of your love.

As a flower writhes and withers
When the rain from heaven falls not,
So I writhe and wither
In the absence of your love.

As a flower cannot live
Without love,
So I fold my leaves and die
Loving you.

HEART-BREAK

I do not ask for your love.
What has the storm on the desert
To do with the beauty of youth?

I do not ask for your love.
All night and day I wear myself out
With the terrible force of my passion.

I do not ask for your love.
I die
With a thirst that cannot be eased,
With a fever that cannot be soothed.

Oh what has the storm on the desert
To do with the beauty of youth!

THE RUNNER

Lithe and strong stands the runner poised for the race.
Lean is his body, freed from superflous flesh;
Clean is the blood which flows within it.
He is suggestive of great strength;
Strength to achieve and overcome.

As you gaze upon him you know that he has not
weakened himself with alcohol or tobacco—
He could not afford to weaken himself with alcohol or
tobacco;
Neither has he weakened himself by sexual indulgence,
or overeating—
He has conserved himself for the race;
And you feel as you gaze upon him
That he will be a winner.

Lithe and strong stands the runner, poised for the race.
The wind is on his face, it rumples his hair.
His muscles are co-ordinated; his being is in harmony.
He is conscious of power.

The track is before him; his eyes are toward the dis-
tant Goal.
He waits, alert; power in every inch of him.
The signal is given; he leaps into the air—
The race is on.

Oh! to be a runner!
To be lithe, strong with coordinate muscles;
To be harmonious and conscious of power;
To be clean and full of strength;
To refuse to waste myself in sensuality;
To conserve myself for the race.

Oh, to be a runner!
To leap, and shout with the wind;
To be utterly free, mad, wild, exultant!

Oh, to be a runner!
To turn one's face toward the Goal;
And to reach the Goal;
Exhausted, if necessary, with blood streaming from the mouth and nostrils;
But to reach the Goal!

Oh, to be a runner!
To be strong, clean, powerful,
To conserve one's energy; to reach the Goal,
To be a winner in the race!

WISDOM

I know a man who is a scholar:
He understands Greek and Latin;
He has delved in the dust of the Past—
I am wiser than he.

I know a man who is a "Success":
He is thoroughly efficient;
He works like machinery—
I am wiser than he.

I know a man who has traveled:
Over the world he has traveled;
From Chaldea to San Francisco—
I am wiser than he.

I know a man who is not a scholar, nor a "Success," nor traveled.
He is a man.
His soul vibrates in harmony with love—
I kneel at his feet.

I GAZE UPON THE HILLS

I gaze upon the hills which rise between us,
The bitter hills which shut me off from you;
And I am very lonely in the night.

Oh I have tried to rise above the hills,
And wildly have I struggled in the dark——
Only to fall upon the stones
Beneath the stars which shine upon us both.

But now I know tho hills may rise between us—
And bitter are the hills which rise between—
They cannot keep my soul from you.

I CANNOT LINGER BY THE ROAD

Altho the violets grow beside the road, dear,
And you are there to twine them in my hair,
With all their fragrance and your love,
I cannot linger by the road.

I go the road, and I must go alone,
And many are the stones beneath my feet.
Some other traveler within the gloom
Shall hear me singing thru the dark.

And tho I fall and never reach the Goal,
Perhaps some other traveler will find the path
By my dark blood-prints on the rocks.

And when my heart is very sad
And I am lonely in the night,
I clasp some outcast to my breast——
And kiss your lips.

IN THE END

You buds who have not blossomed;
You flowers who have not bloomed;
I salute you.
Gently I press my lips upon your lips;
Softly I clasp your hands;
And we walk toward the sunrise together.

Oh Beloved, I understand you.
I do not weep for you.
I shout with joy,
For I know that all buds shall blossom,
And all flowers shall bloom.

What matters a few years or a few centuries?—
In the end all shall attain.

LOVE

Love gives all,
Seeking but the expression of itself.

Love is pure;
Its eyes are toward the stars.

Love is growth;
It moves forward.

Where love is
There is life.

Where love is not
There is nothing.

I SAID TO THE DRY PROFESSOR

I said to the dry professor,
In the midst of his dust and cobwebs:
"There is something higher than reason."
He laughed, thinking me a fool.

Oh these exalters of reason, of the cold intellect;
These worshippers at the tombs of the dead;
These men of petty vision and of rules!
With dead languages, dead philosophies, dead thoughts
They shut themselves from the sunlight,
And demand that others do likewise.

They are but ghouls
Feasting on the dead.

THE PAST

I do not come as a whirlwind, a destroyer of things.
I come as a builder, a maker of things.

I shall not be fettered by the Past, by things outgrown
and musty,
Neither shall I gaze at the Past with scorn.

That within it which is outgrown and musty,
I part aside. It falls like husks from the growing
fruit.

But that within it which is still beautiful and necessary
I conserve—as a foundation for the Future.

SOLIDARITY

In the long night a word was spoken;
And when the Masters heard it—
They who feed on children's blood and women's flesh—
They hid their faces from the stars, and cried:
"It must not be!"

In the long night a word was spoken;
And when the Workers heard it—
They who built the world with strength and fearful pain—
They turned their faces toward the stars and cried:
"It shall be so!"

In the long night a word was spoken;
A single word—yet empires fell, and systems turned to dust.
And thru the lessening gloom a white bird rose,
Singing a hymn unto the dawn.

FORGET

Forget? Forget!
Perhaps when the stars have crumbled
And the dust of the worlds blows wild
I will forget.

Perhaps when my tortured soul
Has risen from its last cross
I will forget.

Forget? Forget!
Yes, I will forget
When you have forgotten.

A SONG OF THE EARTH

This is a song of the Earth.

The Earth is brown and broken.
It is passive without passion.
It is neither moral nor immoral.
It denies none—upon it walk the just and the unjust; the prostitute, the politician, the sensualist, the child, the saint.
Within it crawl foul worms and loathsome things.
The garbage and the rot of man are thrown upon its bosom where all the dead of yesterday lie festering in their filth.
It is an endless graveyard, a huge tomb, where all mankind must fall and decompose.

The Earth is brown and broken—yet from its brownness grows the green grass; and from its brokeness rises the grandeur of the mountains.
It is passive without passion—yet potent with limitless life, and susceptible to love.
It is neither moral nor immoral—yet it sustains that which makes for morality and yields it strength.
It denies none—even as the sun denies none, and serves as a resting place for all who are weary and sinful as well as those who are joyful and pure.
Within it crawl foul worms and loathsome things—yet all men draw from it their food.
From out the garbage and the rot, from out the filth and festering dead—the white-rose blows.
And in the endless graveyard, the huge tomb—the carcasses of men are purified.

* * *

This is a song of the Earth:
The brown, broken, passive Earth; the Earth without passion or morality;
The Earth which denies none; within which crawl foul worms and loathsome things;
Upon whose breast the garbage and the rot of man are mingled with the festering filth of death;
The Earth which is a graveyard, a huge tomb, where all men fall and decompose.

This is a song of the Earth:
The Earth of the green grass and the great mountains;
The Earth that is potent with limitless life;
The Earth which is susceptible to love;
The Earth which is impartial as the Sun;
The Earth from which men draw their food;
The Earth from which the white-rose blows;
The Earth which purifies even the rotting carcasses of men.

This is a song of the Earth;
The Earth contains good and evil;
It contains the moral and the immoral;
It contains rot and the white-rose;
Let those who seek rot find it;
Let them not cry out because it is so;
For verily it hath been written,
What a man seeketh that shall he find.

This is a song of the Earth.
Let those who will listen;
And those who can, understand.

THE GLORY OF FATHERHOOD

The glory of Motherhood
Poets have sung;
But the glory of Fatherhood—
That is left for me to sing.

So now I build a great song,
Not with words,
And you will not find it in this book,
Nor the pages of any other book;
But if you listen you may hear it
Vibrating in the hearts of the Fathers of the race.

SING ON

Sing on, little bird, amid the silver leaves, sing on!
Today is the time of joy;
The time of the glad heart and the full throat
And the passionate trills of love;
But tomorrow—Ah! tomorrow—who knows?

Sing on, oh heart of me, sing on!
Mad you are with the joy of life,
And glad with the gladness of youth.
Sing on!
Sing in the sunshine the songs for those you love;
For today is the time of gladness and love;
But tomorrow!—Ah tomorrow—who knows?

I SING THE BEAUTY OF THE BODY

I sing the beauty of the body,
The human body, marvelous and strange!
Vibrant with radiant life, and fragrant,
Harmonious, co-ordinate—
Bones, muscles, tissues, blood,
All in their places;
Each performing its function,
Each sacred and potent.

I sing the beauty of the body;
Moving with free rythm over the earth,
Swimming in the blue bay;
Dashing thru the breakers' foam;
Sunning itself upon the sand;
The human body, naked, unashamed;
Sacred in every part.

I sing the beauty of the body,
The body of the man—
Stripped of its ugly clothing,
Vibrant in the sun and air,
Yielding its fragrance to the wind;
Strong-limbed and powerful,
Freed from superflous flesh,
Chest filled with air,
Diaphram expanded,
Controlled in every atom,
Moving with grace
In freedom and in joy.

I sing the beauty of the body:
The body of the woman—
Stripped of corsets and tight clothing,
Nude in the sunlight or the moonlight,
Yielding its perfume to the air,
As a flower unfolds its petals to the dawn;
Strong-limbed, with potent charm,
Hair tossing in the wind,
Exquisite breasts lifted to salute the stars.

The body of the woman vibrant, harmonious;
Drawing with mystic attraction the body of the man;
And the body of the man vibrant, harmonious,
Drawing with mystic attraction the body of the woman;
The body of the man and woman
Uniting in harmony
To produce a greater harmony—
The Child.

I sing the beauty of the body;
The body of the man, of the woman, of the child,
The body of youth, maturity, old age.
I sing the beauty of the body,
The human body strong and potent,
The human body marvelous and strange!

TO MY LOVER

I cannot offer you the dew of morning which lay upon
my heart,
For it has wasted with the struggles of my soul and
the fierce heat of a mad world;
But I do give you the blossom of my womanhood—
Which storms cannot waste, nor worlds destroy.
The blossom of my womanhood, Oh my Lover, do I
give to you;
Softly it unfolds its petals to your love.

CAGED

I saw a bird in a cage.
It did not sing,
It beat its wings against the bars.

I saw a tiger in a cage, at the circus.
People came to look at it, and said:
"It is a surly beast."
For the tiger snarled, and looked afar off,
Thinking of its jungle home.

Oh I know why the bird could not sing;
I know how the tiger felt—
For I, too, am caged;
Caged like the bird that could not sing;
Caged like the proud beast of the jungle;
Caged!

The great gray buildings shut me in;
The noises of the city madden me.
I toil and toil, a mere machine—
That those who keep me here
May wander where the flowers grow.

And when I beat my wings against the bars,
With wild rebellion at my fearful fate,
I only fall, prostrate, at last—
The bars remain.

Oh I know why the bird could not sing;
I know how the proud beast of the jungle felt.

I want to feel the brown earth 'neath my feet;
I am so weary of these paving stones.

I want to see the fields all freshly ploughed;
And with the green things growing.
I want to breathe the air when it is clean.

I want to touch the ocean;
To see the sky—from which these great gray buildings
shut me off;
To watch the moon come up,
Behind the trees, behind the silent hills.
I want to learn from the great stillness.

I want to see the cows and sheep alive—
Not hanging bloody in a butcher shop.
I want to touch the trees;
To feel the grass and flowers.
To rest for a brief while—and grow.

(Sad is the bird with broken wings
Who gazes at the clouds and cannot fly—
But sadder is the bird within the cage.)

The bare walls of my narrow room
Have tortured me too long.
The ceaseless toil, the soulless paving stones;
The great gray, ugly buildings
Fill me with vast disgust.

But when I beat my wings against the bars
With wild rebellion at my fearful fate
I only fall, with futile pain—
The bars remain.

Oh I know why the bird could not sing;
I know how the tiger felt—
For I, too, am caged;
Caged like the bird that could not sing;
Caged like the proud beast of the jungle;
Caged!

THE LOST JOY

There is no joy in all the world
Like the joy of labor.

Oh to be a laborer!
To be strong, potent!
To create something—
To be a god!
Oh loudly I carol the song of the joy of labor;
For in all the world there is no joy so great.

* * *

We toil in the dark coal mines underground,
Where death waits in the blackness—
Our labor has no joy.

We toil in the great steel mills,
Where our souls are burnt,
Our bodies bartered for a crust.
If you had toiled as we have toiled,
You would not sing of joy.

We are the children from the factories' gloom.
We know what labor is,
For it has stooped our bodies,
Crushed our souls—
But what is this thing you call joy?

Whence comes this strange and shuddering sound
That wails throughout the blackness?
It is the voice of Labor
Crying for the lost joy.

AN ANSWER

The world is beautiful for you. The sky is soft and blue. The air is clean and full of fragrance.

The flowers grow for you—white lilies, blood-red roses, gentle violets, orange flowers, and all the others that you love.

The trees are tall and strong for you—the sun has turned their leaves to silver.

The waters ripple for you, and the great ocean breaks its waves, for you, against the shore.

The white magnetic moon rises for you. For you the stars come dancing one by one.

For you the birds sing. For you the air is vibrant with their songs.

For you all love and gladness wait. For you, for you the world is beautiful.

* * *

You say the world is beautiful for me?

But I—I toil in a dark factory year by year.

There are no flowers here nor any birds. And when the moon comes out at night I close my eyes, they are so hot and full of pain.

I hear the ceaseless shudder of the wheels.

The air I breathe is full of dirt and smoke.

And as for your great ocean—how can I who have not seen it understand?

You speak of love and gladness—what is that?

Your world it may be beautiful. But ours is full of darkness and of pain.

Your world it may be beautiful—but not for those who struggle in the shadows for a crust!

THE SHADOW

I walked upon the city streets.

It was night.

Behind the plate glass windows there were gorgeous displays; beautiful clothing, silks, laces, evening gowns, satins, bon-bons, flowers—myriads of things, all evidence of great wealth.

Electric lights glittered and shone.

Elegantly gowned people passed, or stepped from luxurious limousines.

Cafes with their music and light, and moving picture shows with their music and light, sparkled invitingly.

Theartres and other places of amusement opened their doors to the crowds without.

People laughed and talked gaily.

Expensive automobiles drew up to curbings. Lounging within them were well-fed men and beautiful women.

Everywhere there was light and music and laughter and evidence of great wealth.

I walked slowly amid the hurrying crowd, observing all.

I noted the gorgeous displays behind the plate-glass windows.

I noted the glitter of the lights.

I noted the huge buildings which towered toward the sky.

I watched the elegantly gowned people as they passed or stepped from luxurious limousines.

I observed the lure of the cafes and places of amusement.

I heard the laughter and the gay chatter.

I gazed upon the expensive automobiles with their well-fed men and beautiful women.

I was impressed by the evidence of great wealth.

Then—I saw seated in a doorway, with outstretched hand, a woman dressed in black.

She was old. Her face was pale and thin;

But she was trying to sing with an aged and shattered voice.

Nobody noticed her.

Amid the laughter and light and gorgeous displays; amid the evidence of great wealth—she was alone.

And her little dark-clad figure cast a shadow on the ground—a black, fearful, ominous shadow.

It seemed to grow larger and blacker and more ominous until it darkened the whole scene of light and laughter.

The shadow of the lonely woman, begging and desolate amid the evidence of great wealth, expanded, grew blacker, more ominous, until it darkened all.

And as I watched—*the shadow fell upon my soul.*

Oh, the Shadow is with me always. I cannot escape it.

It is not merely the Shadow cast by one lonely woman, desolate and begging amid the evidence of great wealth.

It is the Shadow of all the useless wretchedness and poverty and agony that exist.

It is the Shadow cast by the child-slaves as they grind their young souls to dust.

It is the Shadow cast by the young girl who sells her womanhood for bread.

It is the Shadow cast by the workers who toil and toil and toil, like mere machines, shut out from all the joy and loveliness of life.

It is the Shadow cast by poverty and pain.
It is the Shadow cast by foul disease.
It is a dark and fearful thing, made possible by ignorance and greed.
And it is with me always; I cannot escape it.

When I walk in the sunshine, singing, with those I love, behold it is there.
It shuts off the light. It darkens everything.
Our songs cease. We walk away—silent.
When I try to eat, it stands beside me.
With famished eyes it glares at me from out its bony countenance.
My bread is turned to dust; my drink is turned to blood.
I choke and turn away filled with unutterable agony.
When I open my books it stares at me from out their pages.
The sound of music comes to me mingled with its hideous laugh.
It stands between me and all joy and beauty.

Oh, it is with me always! I cannot escape it.
Even in my sleep it will not let me be.
It comes to me within my dreams—black, horrible, ominous.
I hear its fearful, cackling laugh. Its starved eyes glare at me with deadly gaze.
It presses cruel fingers on my heart—and crushes it.
Its clammy mouth is fastened upon mine, drawing my breath.
I seem to smother.
Then I wake with a wild shriek, shuddering and cold.
Oh, God, I am mad—*the Shadow has darkened my soul!*

THE WHITE HOPE

(A Sequel to the Shadow)

Grieve not, my child, that the Shadow has fallen upon
thy soul;
For it must fall upon the souls of all who think and
love.
Let it not darken thee, but seek within it the White
Hope.

For even as the blossoms and the leaves of Spring
Are folded in the gray, bare trees of Winter;
So in the struggle and the pain of things
Emancipation waits.

And thru the darkness of the Shadow
Shines the White Hope.
Men do not see it—for most men are blind;
But all who seek may find.

My child, strive not to lift the Shadow from thy soul
alone;
For it has fallen on the race—
And from the race it must be lifted.
Seek not the White Hope for thy self alone,
Or thou wilt never find it.
And grieve not because the Shadow falls upon thy
soul.

For those who have the Vision and the Dream
Have wept within the Shadow tears of blood.
And those whose souls have soared to the White
Heights
Have fallen deepest in the Dark Abyss;
And mounted on their crosses to the stars.

Weep not, Beloved, lift thine eyes,
The White Hope shines magnetic thru the night;
And when its light illuminates the souls of men—
Then shall the Shadow cease forevermore.

ABANDONMENT

Let good women love with calmness and caution;
I will love with all the passion of my pent up soul.

When the love of a woman, such as I, bursts forth,
The laws and conventions of man
Pale like street lamps in the sunlight.

I will toss myself to you
As a young girl would toss a rose from out her hair.

Open your heart to me, Beloved,
Do not let me fall into the dust!

THE TREE THAT WITHHELD ITS FRUIT

There was a tree which bore fruit;
And those who passed near it ate of it, and were glad.
But one day the tree said:
"Why should I bear fruit for others, and give it without return?
Henceforth I will keep it to myself."

And the tree withheld its fruit, giving it to no one.
And the passersby were sad.
And the tree became barren.

And behold the gardener passed that way,
And laid the ax at the root of it,
And it fell to the earth.

WHO WILL UNDERSTAND?

I have scorched these songs with tears,
I have written them with blood,
Who will understand them?

I have broken my heart on the stones
That its music might be free,
But the songs are wild and strange.
Who will understand them?

I have sinned and suffered all,
I have traded my life for a reed,
Now when I play upon it
Who will understand it?

THE SERPENT

More deadly than the smallpox, leprosy, or all the plagues,
More to be feared than wild beasts from the jungle red with rage,
More loathesome than all loathesome things,
Is the vile seducer of young women.

Prince of all serpents he,
Poisoning where'er he goes,
Crawling in honeyed filth,
He hides his sores with intellect and gentle words,
The stench of his foul rotting soul, with perfume.

Oh! God that he should coil among the flowers,
Leaving slime upon their petals!

SONG OF LIBERTY

When you tore me from my comrades and my lovers
And placed upon my wrists the iron handcuffs;
When the great iron door swung to after me,
And the great iron key turned in the lock,
And I was caged within the dark and silent jail—
Then you exulted, and cried loudly, saying,
"See how we have bound her;
Tomorrow we will lead her forth to death."

And do you think I fear to die, Oh Masters—
I who have died so many deaths?
And do you think that when you have led me to the
electric chair
And have done to me your utmost
That I will be dead?

When you broke my body upon the cross
And pierced me with the torturing nails,
You tho't that you had killed me—
But I am not dead.

When you led me forth in the early morning,
In the cold gray stillness,
And fastened on my neck the brutal rope;
When you had choked my breath out
And I lay cold and silent—
You tho't that you had conquered.

When my head rolled from the guillotine
You laughed—
Believing you were triumphant.

But still I live, Oh Masters,
I still live to defy you—
To hurl my wild defiance in your teeth.
You cannot kill me with your ropes and knives;
You cannot hold me with your iron chains.

You may break my body—
But you cannot break my soul;
You may bind my hands and feet—
But my spirit still is free.

I live forever to defy you;
Forever to defy till I defeat—
And with each death the Vision grows.

I refuse to bow before you, you Masters, you Mighty,
I refuse to be humbled at your feet.
What have I to do with you, and your laws, creeds, conventions?
They are as dust.
Only Liberty is sacred, and Love;
Only my comrades are sacred—
And you have trampled them under foot.

Oh tremble, you Masters, you Mighty,
You think your power great—
But it is little compared to me.
You think that you are strong—
But I am stronger.
You think you can defeat me, bind me, slay me—
But I am the Unconquerable!

Oh tremble, you Masters, you Mighty,
Triumphant Liberty, at last,
Shall rise upon the carcasses of kings
And hurl her victory song across the worlds!

WHEN I AM DEAD

When I am dead, scatter my ashes to the winds, and
do not mourn.
Upon the highest peak of yonder mount, empty the
urn;
I would not lie in the damp earth, a food for sickly
worms;
Nor would I soar into the clouds with silver wings.
I shall be one with the great elements, the sea, the
winds;
My soul shall permeate all things.
I shall be one with life!

Why should you mourn or scatter lovely flowers o'er
my clay?
Or dress it up in costly burial robes?
(A living child weeps thru the dusk in rags.)

Would you seek me? Look not in the damp earth;
Nor to the realms above—I am not there.
I linger in the trees amid their shimmering greens;
I bloom within the violet's heart;
I glow in the warm sunshine;
My soul speaks to you thru babies' eyes.

I wander with the lovers in the Spring.
I toil with the strong ploughman in the field.
I laugh with the young school boys at their play.
I dwell within the poems that you read,
The music that you hear,
The thoughts you think, the scenes on which you gaze.
I am a part of you—a part of all that lives and is.

I am not dead; I have but changed my form
For one more beautiful!

LIGHT IS

From my long agony and tears
I have arisen, pointing to the path.
I cannot lead thee—take my hand.

From my long agony and tears
I have arisen, crying thru the worlds,
Light is—Why closest thou thine eyes?

From my long agony and tears
I have arisen, casting back the bonds
That held my soul in tortures—I am free.

UNFINISHED

Poets have carefully carved their songs,
Toiling with words, phrases, stanzas,
Till all was finished.
But I do not carefully carve my songs,
Toiling with words, phrases, stanzas,
And all that I leave is unfinished—

That you shall be a poet,
Finishing each according to yourself.

THE CROSS

There was a man who carried upon his shoulders a heavy cross.

Tho the shoulders of the man were strong, the cross was so heavy that it bowed him to the dust.

People passed him on the Highway, laughing and dancing, for their crosses were light.

But the man with the heavy cross plodded slowly in the dust.

And he cried aloud, saying:

"Why should I stagger beneath this heavy cross, while others on the Highway dance by me laughing?

I, too, would dance and laugh, but alas, I cannot.

Oh it is cruel and unfair that I should bear this cross, which is heavier than all other crosses in the world."

The man was very sad; and the tears that he wept were of blood.

But one night an angel appeared to him and said:

"Why dost thou not plant thy cross?

It was not meant to weigh upon thy shoulders."

And the man planted his cross.

And lo! it blossomed into a ladder of shining gold *on which he mounted to the stars!*

THERE WAS A MAN

There was a man who was a philosopher and a dreamer.

He started to climb the side of a tall mountain, thinking he would find wonderful flowers at the top.

Tirelessly he toiled upward, with eyes for nothing but the distant mountain top.

He did not see the beauty of the flowers which grew

around his path, but crushed them with hasty feet.

He did not see the glory of the sunset and the sunrise; he did not listen to the voices which called to him as he passed.

But he hurried on with eyes only for the distant mountain top, thinking of the wonderful flowers which he felt must grow there.

At last, after he had become an old man, he reached the top.

But there was not a single flower there—only ice and snow and a Great Silence.

When the man saw he cried aloud with agony.

And for the first time he thought of the flowers he had passed by so hurriedly.

But he could not return to them.

And his sobs were lost in the Great Silence.

AND THEN——

My soul is singing, singing.

Oh I am mad with the joy of life. It is sunset; the glory of it pervades everything; it goes into my blood; I am filled with it.

The charm of the evening enfolds me.

Surely to be young and alive at such an hour is enough.

My being vibrates with ecstacy.

I lift my soul in a mad song of joy.

And then——

A fellow being passes dressed in rags.

The discordant noises of the city smite my ears.

I hear the cry of a little child.

And my song ends in a sob; and I am silent—filled with the sorrows of the world.

THE SLAVE

I am a slave.

I toil and toil and toil; and eat and sleep that I may toil again.

My hands are hard and shapeless.

My eyes are dull and they have lost the dream.

The song within my soul is dead.

I toil and toil and toil! and joy for me is not.

I am a slave. I am a thing that moves and acts like a machine.

My soul has never soared to the white heights of inspiration.

Love, music, beauty—if they are—exist within a world that shuts me out.

I am a slave.

I cannot even think—for when I think I shall no longer be a slave.

A PANE OF GLASS

It is night.

He paces the brightly lighted streets in front of the shop windows.

He is thin and ragged and his stomach is empty.

He has not eaten for three days.

He gazes at food behind the plate glass, and eyes it hungrily.

He gazes at warm clothing and shivers.

He gazes at jewels and gold and knows he has not the price of a bed.

He paces on, hungry, cold, ragged and wretched.

Yet between him and the things which are necessary to his life stands only a pane of glass.

THE SEA

Blue is the sea and bright.

Full it is of gladness and of joy.

The great waves dash in laughing whiteness on the shore.

The waters stretch in peaceful, endless calm.

The rippling waves are silvered with the sun.

Oh calm and lovely Sea, how beautiful thou art!

I sit and watch thee, filled with joyous peace.

I long to dance with thy bright waves, to glide on thy glad waters, to play with thee, for thou art kind.

Oh Sea, I love thee so!

The sun has gone.

The sea is dark and gray.

It stretches its dull shape to meet the darkening clouds—no darker than itself.

And sea and sky are mingled in a deadening mist.

The black waves break upon the rocks.

The mournful sound of them fills me with dread.

The darkness covers us.

The dampness chills my blood.

I hear the ceaseless sounding of the waves.

Is that a dead face there amid the rocks?

Is that a white face here where all is black?

Oh pitiless and cruel Sea! I am afraid—I am afraid!

THE MAN AND THE MIRROR

The Giver of All gave to the man a mirror, and said:

"Thou wilt see only what is reflected in it, turn it where you will."

The man turned the mirror upward, and was joyful, seeing the stars.

He turned it downward, and the mirror reflected mud, stagnant things, foulness.

And, because the man loved the stars, he turned it upward again. But the mirror was clouded with the black breath of sin—and reflected nothing.

When the man could not see the stars, tho he held his mirror upward, he was filled with great agony, and cried out, saying:

"Oh woe is me! woe is me! The stars are dead! The stars are dead!"

He rent his garments, and his tears were of blood.

Then the Giver of All came to the man and said:

"Foolish one, cry not that the stars are dead. *Clean thy mirror!*"

THE ROSE BUSH

There was a rose bush once, that had never borne a single flower.

People said to the master of the garden: "Why do you not pull it up?

It only mars the beauty of your garden."

But the master of the garden smiled and watered the rose bush more carefully and loved it more tenderly than all the other flowers.

And after many years the rose bush put forth a single bud.

And the bud grew until one day it burst into a flower of such marvelous beauty that the like of it had never been seen in all the world before.

And the people came from afar to gaze upon it.

When they beheld it, they laughed with joy, and a new light shone from their faces.

Soon after the rose bush had put forth this marvelous flower it curled up its leaves and died.

But the flower lived forever in the hearts of men!

THE WOMAN BY THE SEA

I saw a woman standing by the sea with outstretched hands, welcoming the world.

There were jewels upon her forehead and her throat; there were jewels upon her fingers and her wrists.

She was sprinkled with rare perfumes, and covered with costly cosmetics.

Upon her body were satins and fine linen and ermine. Upon her feet were sandals of gold.

People came from afar to look at her; and they cried with loud voices:

"Oh beautiful is the woman who stands by the sea!

Oh beautiful is the woman who welcomes the world!"

And they gazed at the jewels upon her forehead and her wrists, and upon the satins and ermine which enfolded her.

Slowly I approached the woman.

Her jewels dazzled me.

The cries of the people impressed me.

But when I came near to her I saw that her face was eaten away by leprosy.

And her body was covered with sores that dripped upon the ground.

With a wild shriek I turned and ran into the night.

But the voices of the people followed me, crying:

"Oh beautiful is the woman who stands by the sea!

Oh beautiful is the woman who welcomes the world!"

THE NIGHT

Dark is the night! ah, very, very dark!

The stars have all burnt out.

And there is only blackness.

Then cries of hungry beasts come to us thru the gloom; and noise of fearful conflict; women's sobs; and strange, inhuman shrieks of pain.

Then stillness—and the deathly darkness covering us.

We struggle in the shadows and we fall.

Our feet are torn and wet with blood.

And all about is the fearful night. We grope and cannot see.

But, Comrade, in this awful hour of strife, let us clasp hands and speak the truth we know:

"The night cannot be always; and the day must break with joyful glory in the east."

Beloved, thru the darkness and the gloom I hear the morning song of birds.

THE POT THAT HAD BEEN MARRED

The potter marred the pot, and cast it aside in disgust.

Then a child came and asked for it;

And because the beauty of the pot was marred and it could never hold wine, the potter gave it.

One morning the potter came into his workshop and saw that it was glorified by a white flower.

As his eyes rested upon the flower, he was transfigured.

With wild joy and exaltation he fell on his knees beside it.

Then he saw that it was growing from the pot that had been marred.

THE WHITE FLOWER

There was a man who loved a White-Flower which grew on the side of a mountain.

Its beauty illumined his soul.

And he tried to explain the wonder of it to the people who lived in the valley below.

But they had never seen the flower and they could not understand.

One day a herd of swine climbed the mountainside.

And when they beheld the White-Flower with their little eyes, they cried disdainfully to the man:

"We have heard you talking to the people of the wonder of your flower.

And is this it? Bah!

It would not make a meal for an ant.

Let us taste the flavor of the thing."

And they tried to rush upon it and would have torn it to pieces.

But the man beat them back.

The swine grunted and returned to their mud.

And the man knelt sadly by the White-Flower with eyes turned toward the stars!

THE PRICE

In the bright sunlight the mighty singer stood upon the mountain top; and his voice was music among the hills. When the people heard it, they were filled with ecstacy. And they lifted their faces upward.

Amid the dark rocks of the mountains toiled a pilgrim, till at last he stood at the Master's feet.

Kneeling, he kissed his garment's hem and exclaimed, "Oh! Master, thy voice is mightier than all other voices in the world!

When the people hear it, they turn their faces upward.

I, too, would sing greatly and move the people toward the mountain tops.

Is it possible that such another voice could be?"

"Yes," replied the Master.

"Oh, tell me how has it been possible? I would give all for such another voice."

"I have paid for it," replied the Master, "a great price."

"Oh! tell me; I will pay all."

"I would not tell thee, pilgrim; the price is great!"

"Oh! tell me; I will pay all; there is no price too great."

Then the Master unloosened his garments and showed unto the pilgrim his many wounds.

When the pilgrim beheld them he turned with a wild shriek and hid himself among the rocks.

LAW

God gave me a garden.
I planted what I chose.
For each flower there was perfume and loveliness.
For each tree there was quiet and shade.
God gave me a garden.
I planted what I chose.
Now shall I cry out when the thistles tear me and the nettles burn?
And shall my tortured soul escape the deadly things which choke it?
Not God himself can save me now from my vile harvest.
And I must reap it all—even to the last poison weed.

THE FLOWER OF LOVE

A man came knocking at my garden gate and said, "Open!"

"What seek you?" I replied.

He said, "The flower of love."

"Oh! I have many flowers of love within my garden. I will show you all."

I showed him all, but he replied:

"The flower I seek is not among them.

It is that strange, mysterious flower that grows within a woman's garden when the light of her mate shines upon her soul.

It blooms but once. Oh give it to me, else I die!"

But I replied, "I cannot give you what is not."

And he departed with sad eyes.

And all who knocked upon my garden gate departed with sad eyes.

Then you came by the garden wall and paused.

I ran to meet you, and the blossoms fell upon our hair.

With one deep look you smote my soul to music and to fire.

And in my garden was a strange, rare flower, dark red, with all the fragrant mystery of Spring.

Within it pulsed my living heart.

Life lingered near and said, "It blooms but once."

I plucked the flower and flung it at your feet.

Beloved, wilt thou lift it to the light, or must it wither there within the dust?

WHERE THE SUN SHINES ALWAYS THERE IS A DESERT

No Garden grows forever in the sun.

Dry is the earth and bare where no rain falls and waters flow not.

Flowers grow not there; no sweet birds sing; and there is only emptiness and waste.

Dry is the soul and bare where no tears fall and sorrow flows not.

Flowers grow not there; no sweet birds sing; and there is only emptiness and waste.

Perhaps the fairest Gardens have been watered with the saddest tears!

FAITH

My Comrade, I love you, I believe in you.
Others have doubted you, but I do not doubt you.
Others have failed to understand you,
But my love is too great to fail in understanding.
Always I believe in you.
Always I am near you.
Always my love and my faith surround you;
With gentle, unbreakable threads they hold you forever.

If you go to the far hills
And are lost in the vast silence—
I am there.
If you go to the great city
And are torn with the pain and the struggle—
I am there.
If you follow the stars to the edge of the world—
I am there.

And if you journey to strange worlds, o'er unknown
seas and pathless wastes—
I am still there.
It is impossible to escape me.

Always I love you, always I believe in you.
When you are torn and tortured;
And the struggle seems too great;
When others doubt you;
And the black hour comes when you, too, doubt your-
self—
I believe in you.
Oh then I believe in you supremely.

I know you will not yield.
I know you will not be subdued.
I know you will surmount all.

If you are weak—my faith shall give you strength.
If you are sad—my faith shall give you joy.
Amid the dark my faith shall give you hope.

No harm can touch you;
No evil come near you;
For always my love protects you;
And always my faith sustains you.

Forever and forever it is so.

And if your soul, in blindness,
Should fall to the deeps of hell,
My faith would save you—even there.

OUT OF CHAOS

I sit alone and gaze over the world,
I see Europe ravaged by the Fiend of War.
I see the whole world tremble 'neath its feet.

I see the men of Germany hating the men of England.
I see the men of England hating the men of Germany.
I see them butchering each other upon the bloody fields;
Dropping bombs upon each other;
Killing each other with poisonous gases.
I see the men in the submarines sinking the huge vessels.
I see the people leap into the black water—and disappear.

I see the race warring against itself
With all the hellish cruelty of civilization.

Each nation prays unto its God for victory.

I see the harvest of the thing called Patriotism
Which was planted in the human heart as good—
But which yields only race hatred, murder, cruelty, bestiality, ignorance.

I see the harvest of the thing called Nationalism
Which sets the nations at each other's throats.

I sit alone and gaze over the world,
Filled with unutterable anguish, dumb with pain.

I sit alone and gaze over the world.
And then my soul is lifted in a mighty shout
Prophetic of the unity of man.

* * *

I am a child of the world.
I owe allegiance to no country more than another country;
To no flag more than another flag;
The boundary of no nation hems me in;
And I love no race of people more than another race of people.
All humanity to me is sacred,
And all humanity is one.

(Shall the head be at war with the feet;
And the hands seek to tear out the heart;
And the organism thru ignorance destroy itself?)

Oh a man is a man!
He is sacred and marvelous.
It matters not where he was born;
Or the language that he speaks.
His blood is precious.
His flesh is wonderful.
He is the child of God.

I refuse to be robbed of my sanity.
I refuse to murder my brother—who is part of myself.
I extend my hands to him saying,
"You are my comrade and I love you."

THE END

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